

BYZANTINE CITIES  
IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

GEORGE OSTROGORSKY

This study is based on a paper delivered at the Symposium on "Byzantium in the Seventh Century" held at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1957.

The author is most grateful to Mr. John Parker for his translation of this paper.

**A**MONG the fundamental problems of Byzantine history it would be hard to name one that has been studied less than has that of the cities. This is not surprising in view of the extremely limited information about them to be found in the sources. Byzantine authors, with their attention steadily directed towards the capital and the imperial court, make comparatively few references to other towns, and when they do so it is, in the majority of cases, to mention them only in passing. The evidence provided by surviving official documents is likewise very sparse, and exists only for the later periods. Yet an understanding of the development and vicissitudes of urban life in Byzantium does, in many respects, provide a key to a better appreciation of the fortunes of the Empire itself; and this is especially true of the stormy period of the early Middle Ages.

For Byzantium the transition from the ancient to the medieval epoch was marked by a series of tremendous shocks, both internal and external. Its agonies at the turn of the seventh century are to some extent the pendant of those that preceded the fall of the Western Empire in the second half of the fifth. In the case of Byzantium, the established forms of imperial government were maintained, and the old political and cultural traditions lived on; none the less, the state went through the same profound crisis, the crisis of the entire Roman Empire, and overcame it only at the cost of abandoning a large part of its ancient heritage. So it was that during the seventh century the Byzantine Empire underwent far-reaching changes and emerged from these bearing substantially different traits. In the provinces new agrarian conditions came into being, and with them new social relationships. The old aristocracy of great landowners was, to a considerable extent, replaced by a growing class of small proprietors. It was a time which saw the formation of a new economic and social order, a new administrative system and a new military organization; in a word, a time in which, after the collapse of the old system, the renovation of the Byzantine state was accomplished.

It is natural to ask why Byzantium, despite all the upheavals through which it passed, and all the changes it underwent, was able to preserve its political structure and to survive the Roman Empire in the West by a thousand years. The answer usually given is that its economic wealth was greater, its rule stronger and more durable. But this, far from explaining anything, only raises further questions. Why was the Byzantine state stronger? What were the elements of its greater durability? What were the sources of its more ample wealth?

Any examination of the elements of continuity in Byzantine history must soon lead to a consideration of the development of Byzantine towns and of their position in the transitional period of the early Middle Ages. It will not, of course, be possible to present here any final solution of this complex and rarely studied problem, nor is it my intention to undertake a detailed and comprehensive investigation of Byzantine urban conditions during this epoch. My aim is a

more limited one; that is, merely to indicate in what way and by what methods such an investigation might be carried out.

In calling attention to the insufficiency of the literature about the history of Byzantine cities, I do not have in mind the fairly numerous and often very valuable studies dealing with the so-called *Book of the Prefect*, since such works are devoted only to Constantinople, and, furthermore to Constantinople in the tenth century. A work of greater scope is a most instructive little book by Bratianu, the first serious attempt to trace the development of Byzantine cities through the centuries.<sup>1</sup> In recent years a number of valuable investigations into the history of Byzantine towns have appeared in Soviet Russia, and fortunately some of them are devoted to the early Middle Ages<sup>1a</sup>. Yet, in spite of the real merits of these works, the most important questions about the development of Byzantine towns still remain open. Such is the problem which here particularly concerns us: to what extent did the old cities survive the turbulent times of the early Middle Ages?

Learned opinion is sharply divided over this question. Some scholars believe that the late antique cities continued an uninterrupted existence into medieval times. This view is held by E.E. Lipšic and M. J. Sjuzjumov,<sup>2</sup> and was earlier advanced most emphatically by A. P. Rudakov, according to whom the Byzantine Empire, in the seventh century as in older times, was "an aggregate of cities (*poleis*)."<sup>3</sup> Others, on the contrary, have concluded that there was a complete decline in the city life of Byzantium in the early Middle Ages. A. P. Každan,<sup>4</sup> who takes this view, points out that the assumption of an uninterrupted development of Byzantine cities was based on evidence of intense urban life taken from sources either of the sixth century on the one hand, or of the tenth and following centuries on the other, whence it was deduced that a similar situation existed also in the early Middle Ages, about which our information is so scanty.

In the absence of direct evidence about the conditions of Byzantine cities in the early Middle Ages, scholars have turned to numismatic material. It is chiefly on this basis that Každan supports his conclusions about the decline of Byzantine cities from the seventh to the ninth century. With the help of the catalogues of the great coin collections, especially the one by Wroth of the British Museum collection, and the still more comprehensive catalogue of I. I. Tolstoy,<sup>5</sup> Každan attempts first of all to establish certain data regarding the relative size of monetary issues in different periods of Byzantine history. He fully realizes

<sup>1</sup> G. I. Bratianu, *Privilèges et franchises municipales dans l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1936).

<sup>1a</sup> We may note two important papers on the Byzantine city which appeared after the present study had gone to press: E. Kirsten, "Die byzantinische Stadt," *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* (Munich, 1958); F. Dölger, "Die frühbyzantinische und byzantinisch beeinflusste Stadt," *Atti del 3º Congresso internazionale di studi sull' alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1958), p. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> E. E. Lipšic, "K voprosu o gorode v Vizantii VIII-IX vv.," *Viz. Vrem.*, 6 (1953), pp. 113-31; M. Y. Sjuzjumov, "Rol' gorodov-emporiev v istorii Vizantii," *ibid.*, 8 (1956), pp. 26-41; "Problemy ikonoborčeskogo dviženija v Vizantii," *Učenyje zapiski Sverdlovskogo Gosudavstvennogo Pedagogičeskogo Instituta*, 4 (1948), p. 58 ff.

<sup>3</sup> A. P. Rudakov, *Očerki vizantijskoj kul'tury po dannym grečeskoj agiografii* (Moscow, 1917), p. 71 ff.

<sup>4</sup> A. P. Každan, "Vizantijskie goroda v VII-XI vekach," *Sovetskaja Archeologija*, 21 (1954), pp. 164-83.

<sup>5</sup> W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine Coins in the British Museum*, I and II (London, 1908); I. I. Tolstoy, *Vizantijskie monety*, I-IX (St. Petersburg, 1912-14).

the fortuitous element in the composition of every coin collection, and he duly emphasizes this. Yet, with all necessary reservations in mind, it must be admitted that the evidence of the collections, which number several thousand coins, is nevertheless significant.

On the basis of Wroth's catalogue, Každan gives the following statistics:<sup>6</sup> from the time of Anastasius I to that of Maurice (491–602) the catalogue has 1,349 coins, i.e. an average of 12.3 coins per year; from Phocas to Constantine IV (602–685) 1,134, or 13.7 per year; from Justinian II to Michael II (685–829) however, there are only 423 coins, i.e. 2.9 coins per year; from Theophilus to Nicephorus II (829–969) there are 226, or 1.6 per year; from John Tzimiskes to Nicephorus III (969–1081) 283 coins or 2.5 per year, and from Alexius I Comnenus to Alexius III Angelus (1081–1195) 349 coins, that is, an annual average of 3.0.

Thus, from the end of the seventh century (and even, in fact, from the middle of that century) there appears to have been a drastic reduction in coin issues. Fundamentally the same picture is given by Tolstoy's catalogue, which is fuller but covers a shorter period.

Každan then goes on to discuss coin finds made in the course of excavations. As regards the cities of Greece, especially Athens and Corinth, such numismatic material has been adequately published and investigated.<sup>7</sup> It shows in general a drastic diminution in the number of coins found dating from the middle of the seventh century onwards (this is especially clear at Athens).<sup>8</sup> The subsequent increase in their number begins in the middle of the ninth century at Corinth, and not earlier than the second half of the tenth century at Athens. These facts have already been the subject of a number of investigations, and have provided material for some controversy.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, there have been very few publications or studies of coin finds made in Asia Minor. This is unfortunate, since such material, assuming the validity of numismatic evidence for our purpose, would have much greater importance for the history of Byzantine cities. The decline of the cities of Greece, even if we were to regard it as established by the above statistics, would not

<sup>6</sup> Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Thompson, *The Athenian Agora. Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, II: *Coins from the Roman through the Venetian Period* (Princeton, 1954); A. R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Coins Found at Corinth*, 1925 (New Haven, 1930); J. K. Finlay, "Corinth in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, 7 (1932), p. 494; Katharine M. Edwards, "Report on the Coins in the Excavations at Corinth During the Years 1930–35," *Hesperia*, 6 (1937), p. 241 ff.; J. M. Harris, "Coins Found at Corinth. Report on the Coins Found in the Excavations at Corinth during the Years 1936–39," *Hesperia*, 10 (1941), p. 143 ff.; cf. also A. Bon, *Le Péloponnèse byzantin jusqu'en 1204* (Paris, 1951), p. 53; P. Charanis, "The significance of Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Historia*, 4 (1955), pp. 165–6.

<sup>8</sup> This diminution is not evident from the table given by M. Thompson, "Some Unpublished Bronze Money of the Early Eighth Century," *Hesperia*, 9 (1940), p. 73, note 33, which was used by Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 170, as the coins are there grouped by century, and only the sum total of all seventh-century coins is given. It can be clearly seen, however, in the excellent later publication of the same scholar (see previous note) which shows that a large number (232) of the coins of Heraclius was found in the Athenian Agora, and a still larger number (817) of Constans II's issues, but only very few of those of Constantine IV (30) and a quite negligible number of the coins of his successors (*op. cit.*, pp. 70–1).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bon, *op. cit.*, and "Le problème slave dans le Péloponnèse à la lumière de l'archéologie," *Byzantion*, 20 (1950), p. 13 ff.; Charanis, *op. cit.*, p. 163 ff.

necessarily imply that all cities of the Empire suffered a similar fate. However, in the few cases from Asia Minor where we do have the necessary data at our disposal—as, for example, at Pergamum, Sardis, and Priene—we obtain, in general, the same picture: a fairly large number of coins of the sixth and first half of the seventh century (to Constans II inclusive), and a very small number, or even a complete lack of coins in the second half of the seventh century and later. Only at Pergamum is there further evidence of a considerable increase at the time of the Comneni.<sup>10</sup>

On the basis of the coin finds at Pergamum, their investigator K. Regling lost no time in sketching the historical development of that city and asserted that the material published by him exactly reflected its changing fortunes.<sup>11</sup> Essentially the same is done by Každan, admittedly on the basis of much more extensive material, but also drawing much wider inferences. It would seem, however, that the conclusions of his interesting article, which at first sight appear so convincing, are based upon a serious misunderstanding.

The crucial point is this: all the finds referred to above, both in Greece and Asia Minor, consist very largely, if not almost exclusively, of bronze coins. The marked decrease of their number, therefore, general as it was after Constans II, means only that, beginning with the middle of the seventh century, there was a cut back in bronze coinage, and not necessarily a diminution of all coin issues.<sup>12</sup> This becomes clear if we examine the collections of Byzantine coins with this reservation in mind. In compiling his statistics from the catalogues of Wroth and Tolstoy, Každan did not differentiate between the various kinds of coins, and therefore, did not notice that the decrease in the seventh and eighth centuries was limited to bronze, and that it did not affect the basic coinage, which was, of course, gold. If we make a count of the gold coins published in the same

<sup>10</sup> Cf. K. Regling, "Münzfunde aus Pergamon," reprinted from *Blätter für Münzfreunde*, 1914 = *Pergamon*, I (1913), pp. 355–63, 329–36; H. W. Bell, *Sardis. Publications of the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis*, XI, *Coins*, I, 1910–14, (Leiden, 1916), p. 76ff.; K. Regling, *Die Münzen von Priene* (Berlin, 1927). See also S. McA. Mosser, *A Bibliography of Byzantine Coin Hoards* (New York, 1935), where various chance finds in a number of other towns in Asia Minor are briefly recorded. The finds of Byzantine coins at Antioch are also relevant to this subject. It would be natural to suppose that the Arab conquest had a great influence in determining their chronological distribution, yet we are confronted with the striking fact that here, too, coins of Constans II were found in fairly large numbers, while those of subsequent emperors down to the tenth century were completely lacking. See Dorothy M. Waage, *Antioch on the Orontes*, IV, pt. 2: *Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Crusaders' Coins* (Princeton, 1952).

A. P. Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 167f., included in his investigation coin finds made beyond the boundaries of the Empire, mainly relying for this purpose on the data given in Mosser's catalogue. On the basis of these data it is apparent that, both in the West and in the Eastern European countries, and in Scandinavia no less than in the Danubian regions, the number of Byzantine coin finds of the seventh century suddenly declines sharply everywhere, becomes still smaller in the eighth and ninth centuries, and increases once more in the tenth. But if we are to see in this an indication of the decline of Byzantine trade with other countries, or the adoption of a system of barter, we should not seek for all the causes of such a change only in Byzantium itself; even more compelling causes are certainly to be found in the conditions of those other countries.

<sup>11</sup> Regling, "Münzfunde aus Pergamon," p. 329.

<sup>12</sup> Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 172, points out that the only exception to the presumed general scarcity of coins from the eighth and ninth centuries is the find made at Lagbe in Pamphylia, where coins of precisely this period were discovered. But this seeming anomaly is easily explained: the hoard found here consisted of gold coins, which is indeed an unusual phenomenon. It contained 102 coins of all the Emperors from Leo III to Theophilus, those Emperors, that is, whose coins are so scarce in the ordinary bronze hoards. Cf. E. T. Newell, *The Byzantine Hoard of Lagbe* (New York, 1945).

catalogues, leaving aside both bronze and silver, we shall obtain very different results.

Wroth's catalogue will then give the following figures for gold coins:

From Anastasius I to Phocas (491-610) : 197, an average of 1.66 per year  
 From Heraclius to Justinian II (610-711) : 380, an average of 3.76 per year  
 From Philippicus to Irene (711-802) : 149, an average of 1.64 per year  
 From Nicephorus I to Leo VI (802-912) : 95, an average of 0.86 per year  
 From Alexander to Basil II (912-1025) : 45, an average of 0.39 per year  
 From Constantine VIII to Nicephorus III (1025-1081) : 85, an average of 1.52 per year.

Let us now compare these figures with Tolstoy's catalogue which includes the data of Sabatier and Wroth and also provides material from his own collection and from the Hermitage. Here we have:

From 395 to 491: 250 gold coins, an average of 2.60 per year  
 From 491 to 610: 241 gold coins, an average of 1.87 per year  
 From 610 to 711: 595 gold coins, an average of 5.89 per year  
 From 711 to 802: 213 gold coins, an average of 2.34 per year  
 From 802 to 867: 91 gold coins, an average of 1.40 per year.

Thus, we observe from the above statistics that gold issues not only did not diminish in the seventh century, but on the contrary, increased significantly.<sup>13</sup> I might not have insisted particularly on this fact and might have ascribed it to chance, which, of course, greatly influences the composition of every coin collection,<sup>14</sup> had I not had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the rich coin collection at Dumbarton Oaks, the principal part of which (the Hayford Pierce Collection) contains about half as many Byzantine coins as are to be found in the British Museum.<sup>15</sup> It is most instructive to find that this Collection, when compared with the data in Wroth's and Tolstoy's catalogues, gives on the whole a similar picture of the coin issues in different epochs. Once more, it shows a strong falling-off in bronze coins after the reign of Constans II, and at the same time not only no reduction, but even an increase of gold coins in the seventh century, when compared to the previous epoch.

The figures are:

<sup>13</sup> With regard to the number of gold coins, there is no difference to be observed between the first and second halves of the seventh century that would even remotely suggest a parallel to the very marked diminution, noted above, in the number of copper coins after Constans II. Wroth's catalogue lists 136 gold coins of Heraclius (a yearly average of 4.4), 103 of Constans II (= 3.81 per year), 47 of Constantine IV (= 2.76 per year), 71 of the two reigns of Justinian II (= 4.44 per year), and 33 of Tiberius Apsimar (= 4.7 per year). Tolstoy's figures are: Heraclius, 180 (= 5.8 per year), Constans II, 199 (= 7.37 per year), Constantine IV, 84 (= 4.94 per year), Justinian II, 82 (= 5.125 per year), and Tiberius, 50 (= 7.14 per year).

<sup>14</sup> It is undoubtedly to chance that we should ascribe the very small number of gold coins of the ninth, and particularly of the tenth, century in the British Museum Collection.

<sup>15</sup> In the table given below I have analyzed only this basic part of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Later acquisitions and smaller individual collections at Dumbarton Oaks are not included in the table. These would not, in fact, materially alter the general picture, since the composition of small collections is usually fortuitous and reflects the personal tastes and interests of the collectors.

From 491 to 610: 109 gold coins, an average of 0.99 per year  
 From 610 to 711: 212 gold coins, an average of 2.1 per year  
 From 711 to 802: 65 gold coins, an average of 0.71 per year  
 From 802 to 912: 96 gold coins, an average of 0.87 per year  
 From 912 to 1025: 70 gold coins, an average of 0.62 per year  
 From 1025 to 1081: 152 gold coins, an average of 2.71. per year.

The Dumbarton Oaks Collection does not show the striking reduction of gold coins in the ninth and especially in the tenth century, that is found in the catalogue of Wroth. This confirms the view, expressed above, that the apparent reduction suggested by the British Museum figures is a matter of chance. We also find here, for the eleventh century, a greater increase of gold coins than that indicated by Wroth's material. But—and this is what most concerns us at present—the Dumbarton Oaks figures once more show a very marked increase of gold coins in the seventh century. This is a phenomenon that deserves the attention of numismatic scholars.

We do not know why it was that from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the seventh century so much bronze was issued, whereas from the second half of the seventh and the following centuries so little has been preserved, or why, for that matter, the minting of silver coins was so restricted in Byzantium. Further numismatic investigations may some day provide the answers to these questions, which still remain open.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it will be shown, among other things, what influence reminting had in preserving the currency of given periods. In any case, numismatic material can have only a secondary value in dealing with the problem that confronts us now, namely, the development of urban life and urban economy. Such evidence, however, far from supporting the theory of the decline of the Byzantine cities and urban economy in the seventh century, only confirms the continued existence of a monetary economy in Byzantium, a fact which is sufficiently documented by other sources.

We have, however, further evidence, also indirect, it is true, but much more reliable, which may shed some light on the existence of cities in early medieval Byzantium. First of all, there are lists of bishoprics existing at that time. It is well known that ecclesiastical organization was founded on the administrative organization of the Empire, which in turn was based on the city, the *polis*. Sees were naturally established in cities, and, as a rule, in every city of some importance. In Justinian's *Codex*, a law dating back to the time of Zeno proclaims, Πᾶσαν πόλιν . . . ἔχειν ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου ἀχώριστον καὶ ἴδιον . . . ἐπίσκοπον θεσπίζομεν.<sup>17</sup> The episcopal list ascribed to St. Epiphanius always begins the enumeration of bishoprics in individual regions by indicating that such and such a metropolitan see had under it so many cities *or* episcopal sees (ἔχει

<sup>16</sup> As one of the most distinguished of contemporary numismatists, A. R. Bellinger, has emphasized, the problem of the abundance or scarcity of the issues, "the basic question about imperial policy and the coinage" has so far received no answer. A. R. Bellinger, "The Coins and Byzantine Imperial Policy," *Speculum*, 31 (1956), p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Cod. Just.*, I. 3.35.



ὕπ' αὐτὴν πόλεις ἦτοι ἐπισκοπὰς).<sup>18</sup> The concept of a see thus coincided with that of a city.

This so called *Ecthesis* of St. Epiphanius, the most ancient of surviving *Notitiae episcopatum*, belongs, according to Gelzer, to the time of Heraclius.<sup>19</sup> Whether it was in fact drawn up under that Emperor or somewhat later,<sup>20</sup> it does not, unfortunately, provide any data which might help us to determine what sees did in fact exist within the confines of the Empire in the seventh century. As Gelzer himself has pointed out, this *Ecthesis* does not introduce any appreciable changes into the order that had been established under Justinian.<sup>21</sup> An even less reliable source is the *Notitia episcopatum* that is next in seniority, usually called the *Notitia* of Leo III.<sup>22</sup> This is a compilation made from older lists, including, as if nothing had happened, provinces that had long been lost, and presenting, furthermore, instances of obvious negligence.<sup>23</sup> In a word, this *Notitia*, like many other documents of the same kind, does not reflect the real facts, and it would be a mistake to draw from it any conclusions about the number of cities actually existing on imperial territory at that time.<sup>24</sup>

Quite different in character are the lists of bishops found in conciliar acts.

<sup>18</sup> H. Gelzer, "Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der *Notitiae episcopatum*," *Abh. der Bayer. Akad. der Wiss.*, 21 (1901), p. 534 f.

<sup>19</sup> Gelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

<sup>20</sup> If it is true that the town of Γορδοσέρβα in Bithynia, mentioned in this document (Gelzer, p. 538) owes its name to the settlement of Serbs in that province, it follows that this work can hardly have been composed as early as the time of Heraclius and must be referred to the reign of one of his successors. The first reference of certain date to this town is to be found in the acts of the Trullan Council of 692, one of the signatories of which was Ἰσίδωρος ἀνάξιος ἐπίσκοπος Γορδοσέρβων τῆς Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας (Mansi, XI, 996 B).

<sup>21</sup> Gelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

<sup>22</sup> Ed. C. de Boor, "Nachträge zu den *Notitiae Episcopatum*," *Zeitschr. für Kirchengeschichte*, 12 (1891), pp. 519–34. Cf. E. Gerland, *Corpus Notitiarum Episcopatum Ecclesiae Orientalis Graecae*, I, 1 (Kadiköy, 1931); G. Konidares, Αἱ μητροπόλεις καὶ ἀρχιεπισκοπαὶ τοῦ οἰκουμενικοῦ πατριαρχείου καὶ ἡ "τάξις" αὐτῶν, I, 1, *Texte u. Forschungen zur byz.-neogr. Philol.*, 13 (Athens, 1934). Unlike the *Notitia* of Pseudo-Epiphanius, this document includes the sees of Illyricum and must, consequently, have been composed some time after these had been placed under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. But this does not in any way prove that it dates from the reign of Leo III: it merely shows that it cannot be earlier than his reign if, as is generally thought, the separation of Illyricum from Rome took place in 733. However, according to V. Grumel, "L'annexion de l' Illyricum oriental, de la Sicile et de la Calabre au patriarcat de Constantinople," *Recherches de science religieuse*, 40 (1952), p. 191 ff., this separation took place under Constantine V. All of this, of course, does not exclude the possibility that this *notitia* originated at a still later date. The view of N. Bees, "Beiträge zur kirchlichen Geographie Griechenlands," *Oriens Christ.*, N. S. 4 (1915), p. 238, that this *notitia* was composed "sicher vor dem Slaveneinbruche in Griechenland und zwar vor dem J. 723," rests on an obvious misunderstanding of the facts. It is curious that Mgr. Sophronius (Eustratiades) who, apparently unaware of De Boor's Edition 1891, published the text of this *notitia* a second time (Νέα Σιών, 26 [1921], pp. 556 f., 577 f.), considered it to be earlier than the *notitia* of Pseudo-Epiphanius, and referred it to the period before the Arab conquest.

<sup>23</sup> More than sixty years ago L. Duchesne ("Les anciens évêchés de la Grèce," *Mélanges d'archéol. et d'hist.*, 15 [1895], p. 379 ff.) made some very penetrating observations about this *notitia*. Cf. also V. Laurent, Byzantion, 7 (1932), p. 521.

<sup>24</sup> As, for instance, did A. P. Rudakov in his most useful book (*op. cit.*, p. 73), where he estimated the number of towns in the Empire during the seventh century on the basis of the *notitia* of Pseudo-Epiphanius. See the justified criticism of A. P. Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 165. It should be added, however, that the significance of the *Notitiae Episcopatum* as historical sources, and in particular that of the so called iconoclast *notitia*, was also greatly over-estimated by those scholars who contributed so much to the understanding of documents of this kind, i.e., H. Gelzer, "Die kirchliche Geographie Griechenlands vor dem Slaveneinbruche," *Zeitschr. für wiss. Theol.*, 35 (1892), p. 419 ff.; E. Gerland, *op. cit.*; G. Konidares, *op. cit.*, esp. p. 3, not to mention Sophronius Eustratiades, *op. cit.*

Here we have, not compilations from older sources, but official lists of persons who represented their city-bishoprics at councils held at precisely known dates. Often we have both the official list of participating bishops and a list of their signatures confirming the conciliar decisions. At no time, of course, did all the bishops living at a given time take part in a council, so that these lists cannot give us an altogether complete picture. Besides, such lists as have come down to us have not always been preserved in a satisfactory condition, and a great number of synodal acts, including those of the seventh century, have not yet been critically edited. In spite of all these shortcomings, the lists of bishops to be found in conciliar acts constitute a source of first-rate importance and, generally speaking, of great reliability. If they do not provide a complete inventory of all the sees, they do at least enumerate a large number of them, often the great majority of the dioceses and towns existing within the imperial borders at a given time. A comparison of the lists of bishops present at councils, with their actual signatures—in which the possibility of inadvertent omission is very small and which are, for this reason, especially important—makes a mutual check possible and is of great help in correcting chance errors. These conciliar lists have often been used by historians in other connections,<sup>25</sup> but have not hitherto been exploited as evidence for the history of Byzantine towns.

For the study of Byzantine cities in the seventh century, the episcopal lists of the Sixth Oecumenical Council of 680 and those of the Quinisext or Trullan Council of 692 are of particular interest. To judge from our somewhat unsatisfactory editions, the acts of the former were signed by 174 bishops and those of the latter by 211, each of whom represented his own episcopal city.<sup>26</sup> These are very sizable figures, which cannot in any way be made to square with the supposed disappearance of Byzantine cities in the seventh century. Furthermore, they do not represent anything like the total number of all the episcopal cities existing at that time. This is especially evident from the different number of signatories who were present at two councils chronologically so close to each other. In addition, not only are many signatures found in the acts of 692 that are absent from those of 680, but also many sees were represented at the earlier council and not at the later one. Theophanes, although his figure may not be quite correct, asserts that 289 bishops were present at the Sixth Oecumenical Council,<sup>27</sup> i.e., over 100 more than in the preserved lists.

At any rate, the episcopal lists of 680 and 692, despite their incompleteness, do give us a valuable and wholly factual enumeration of episcopal cities existing on Byzantine territory at the end of the seventh century. The trustworthiness of these lists will become quite clear when we examine more closely the names of the cities mentioned therein and see how they differ from those mentioned in earlier documents of this kind.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for instance F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IXe siècle* (Paris, 1926), where the author makes extensive use of conciliar episcopal lists and also of the various *Notitiae Episcopatum* as sources for the history of ecclesiastical organization in the Slavic regions of the Balkans.

<sup>26</sup> Mansi, XI, 640–53 and 988–1005. Cf. Hefele-Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles*, III, 1 (1901), p. 508, 575.

<sup>27</sup> Theophanes, p. 360, 2.

Unfortunately, the acts of the previous council, the Fifth Oecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553, have come down to us in such a mutilated condition that they can be used for our purpose only to a limited extent.<sup>28</sup> A more dependable criterion for purposes of comparison is provided by the acts of the Fourth Oecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451, which enumerate 340 bishops.<sup>29</sup> These acts may be supplemented in some cases by the episcopal lists of the Council of Ephesus in 431 which, though it was attended by a much smaller number of bishops, nevertheless affords evidence of a number of sees not found in the acts of Chalcedon,<sup>30</sup> and also by the signatures on letters of individual bishops in answer to the encyclical of Emperor Leo I in 458.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, we may use by way of comparison the enumeration of cities within the Empire in the well-known *Synecdemus* of Hierocles, probably composed in the early years of Justinian I,<sup>32</sup> though it must be borne in mind that not all the towns cited by Hierocles were episcopal sees, so that the differences between his list and the episcopal lists of the conciliar acts are not always significant.<sup>33</sup>

A comparison of the episcopal lists of 680 and 692 with earlier lists clearly shows the changes that had occurred in the intervening period. These changes cannot be attributed only to fortuitous circumstances, i.e. either to the absence of certain bishops from a given council or to omissions from the acts. The fundamental and really significant difference consists in the fact that the bishops of those regions which had been lost by the Empire in the first half of the seventh century, or in which Byzantine authority had, in fact, been suspended, either do not appear at all at the councils of 680 and 692, or appear in quite insignificant numbers. From the territories that had fallen under Arab domination only the three Oriental patriarchs themselves were represented, since, according to tradition, an oecumenical council was hardly possible without their participation. From the Balkan lands there was only a handful of metropolitans and bishops, largely from cities which, like Thessalonica and a few coastal towns of Thrace and Greece, had been able to survive the Slav invasion. At both councils the only city represented from the interior of the Balkans was Stobi.<sup>34</sup> It is curious that the representatives of the most important Balkan sees

<sup>28</sup> Mansi IX, 173f. Signatures of the bishops, pp. 389-96.

<sup>29</sup> E. Schwartz, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, II, vol. 1-6. All the episcopal lists found in the acts of this council are collected by Schwartz in his work "Über die Bischofslisten der Synoden von Chalkedon, Nicaea und Konstantinopel," *Abh. der Bayer. Akad. der Wiss., Philos.-hist. Abt.*, N. F. Heft 13 (1937), p. 15ff.

<sup>30</sup> E. Schwartz, *op. cit.*, I, 1, 2, pp. 55-64 and I, 1, 7, pp. 111-17 (lists of signatures). Cf. also I, 1, 2, pp. 3-7 and I, 1, 7, pp. 84-8 (lists of those present).

<sup>31</sup> Mansi, VII, 523-622.

<sup>32</sup> E. Honigsmann, *Le Synekdesmos d'Hieroclès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre* (Brussels, 1939). For the date of composition see Honigsmann's introduction, p. 1ff. The list of George of Cyprus, composed about 600, is unfortunately of no assistance as it has come down to us in a very incomplete form and the sections most relevant to this enquiry have been lost.

<sup>33</sup> The much-disputed question whether the *Synecdemus* of Hierocles is based upon ecclesiastical documents or upon secular and administrative sources is decisively answered by Honigsmann, *op. cit.*, p. 2f. in favor of the second alternative.

<sup>34</sup> Mansi, XI, 673C and 993B. St. P. Kyriakides, *The Northern Ethnological Boundaries of Hellenism* (Salonica, 1955), pp. 22, 26, maintains that, in addition to Stobi, Serdica and Scupi remained uninterruptedly in Greek hands through the seventh and eighth centuries. In the case of Serdica he does not

mentioned in the acts of 692, namely, the metropolitans of Thessalonica, Heracleia, and Corinth, were not actually present at the Council, and that a blank space was left for their signatures, as was done also for the signatures of representatives from Rome, Sardinia, and Ravenna.<sup>35</sup> This might perhaps be explained as an intentional absence on the part of the metropolitans of Thessalonica and Corinth, who were at that time subordinate to the Roman church,<sup>36</sup> but this explanation cannot apply to the case of the metropolitan of Heracleia. In addition, the fact of being subordinate to Rome did not hinder the metropolitan of Gortyna in Crete from attending the council of 692 and signing its decisions as the representative of "all the synod of the Holy Roman Church."<sup>37</sup>

As far as can be ascertained, only twelve bishoprics from the whole Balkan peninsula were represented at the Council of 680: Thessalonica, Heracleia, Corinth, Selymbria, Mesembria, Stobi, Byzae, Sozopolis, Panion, Argos, Athens, Lacedaemon. In 692 there are again twelve signatures, including the three metropolitan sees, the representatives of which, as I have said above, were not actually present, but the list is not identical with that of 680: Thessalonica, Heracleia, Corinth, Selymbria, Mesembria, Stobi, Uzusa, Ainos, Philippi, Amphipolis, Edessa, Dyrrhachium.<sup>38</sup> Of the eighteen Balkan provinces listed by Hierocles, only six (Europa, Rhodopa, Macedonia I, Macedonia II, Hellas, Epirus nova) sent a few individual representatives, while the cities of the remaining twelve provinces (Thracia, Haemimontus, Moesia II, Scythia, Thessalia, Epirus vetus, Dacia mediterranea, Dacia ripensis, Dardania, Praevalis, Moesia I, Pannonia) were not represented at all at either council. All those cities,

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offer any evidence in support of this statement. For Scupi he refers to the signature of John, Bishop of Nova Justinianopolis in the acts of 692, but does not indicate the grounds for identifying Scupi, the modern Skoplje, with this town. To these two places he also adds Castoria, "which we know was Greek and used during Irene's reign as a place of exile for conspirators." (*op. cit.*, p. 26). This rests on the statement of Cedrenus, II, 24, 10, that Irene, prompted by the counsels of the logothete Stauracius, exiled the Patrician Theodore Camulianus, together with a number of other dignitaries, ἐν Καϊστορίᾳ (i.e. *in quaestorio*), which Kyriakides simply altered to ἐν Καστορίᾳ. Theophanes refers to the same Camulianus more clearly and in greater detail (whereas Cedrenus rather unsuccessfully abbreviates their common source)—and from his narrative it is clear that Camulianus was not sent to Castoria, but held under arrest in his own house (Theoph. 465, 6; cf. also 464, 23), and soon after that we find him occupying the position of *strategus* of the Armeniac theme (*ibid.*, 468, 24). The problem of Nova Justinianopolis, referred to above, deserves more serious study. It is remarkable that the bishop of this town should have signed the acts of 692 immediately after the patriarchs and before the representatives of all the most ancient and powerful metropolitan sees (see Mansi, XI, 989A). This unusual distinction, which was not to be repeated at any other council, suggests that the town in question enjoyed the special favor of Justinian II. In any event, it was not the Bithynian Nova Justinianopolis or Nova Justiniana, founded by Justinian I (see below, p. 57, n. 43). The bishop of the latter town also signed the acts of 692, together with the other bishops from Bithynia, and is very characteristically styled ἐπίσκοπος πόλεως νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς δευτέρας τῶν Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας (Mansi XI, p. 996D).

<sup>35</sup> Mansi, XI, 928BC and 989AB.

<sup>36</sup> At the council of 680 (Mansi, XI, 640B and 641A) they both figure as vicars of the Roman see.

<sup>37</sup> Mansi, XI, 928C and 989B.

<sup>38</sup> The bishops from the islands are not counted here. But it is curious to see that at the council of 680 three representatives from Crete were present, and at that of 692, four. The church of Crete belonged to the diocese of Illyricum; its head, the Metropolitan of Gortyna, was present at both councils. In view of the extremely small number of representatives from Illyricum itself, this is striking and does not suggest that communication by sea was particularly difficult at that time. It was also probably by sea and not along the *Via Egnatia*, that the bishop of Dyrrhachium came to Constantinople in 692. He had not been present at the council of 680.

as also the majority of cities of the six poorly represented provinces, must either have disappeared or have been cut off from Constantinople.

When we compare next the towns of Asia Minor mentioned in the acts of 680 and 692, with those mentioned in the acts of preceding centuries or even in the very detailed list of Hierocles, we obtain a completely different picture. Here the majority of episcopal towns continued to exist and to send their representatives to Church synods. It is for this very reason that the councils of 680 and 692, in spite of the almost total absence of bishops from the Balkans, were nevertheless fairly well attended. The overwhelming majority of those present came from Asia Minor.

Even in the case of Asia Minor, of course, when the lists of the seventh century are compared with more ancient ones, they are not found to coincide completely, if for no other reason than that the representatives of all the bishoprics existing at a given time could not all have been present at any one council. However, the differences which we notice here are quite insignificant. In fact, when we compare the conciliar lists of the seventh century or even of later councils with the lists of the preceding centuries or with Hierocles', we are struck not by their differences, but by their similarity.

The degree of this similarity becomes very apparent in the tables given by Ramsay in his fundamental work on the historical geography of Asia Minor.<sup>39</sup> I shall quote only a few telling examples. In the province of Galatia II (Salutaris) out of the seven bishoprics represented at Chalcedon in 451, six appear at the councils of 680 and 692, i.e. all except for the insignificant town of Petenissus;<sup>40</sup> on the other hand, at both councils of the seventh century the bishop of Celanion was present, whereas this town was not represented at Chalcedon, but is mentioned by Hierocles.<sup>41</sup> In Bithynia Hierocles lists sixteen towns (the list in the acts of Chalcedon is here quite incomplete): yet fourteen of them appear at the councils of 680 and 692, so that only two are missing, whereas there appear four new bishoprics,<sup>42</sup> which were presumably—some of them certainly—founded in the intervening period.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the most amazing instance of continuity is the following: in the province of Paphlagonia, both Hierocles and the Councils of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries mention fourteen towns, and we find the same fourteen towns in the episcopal lists of 680, 692, and 787, and even in a number of *Notitiae episcopatum*.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, while the great majority of Balkan bishoprics known to us from early Byzantine sources are absent from the episcopal lists of 680 and 692, the bishop-

<sup>39</sup> W. M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890). Cf. the less exhaustive tables in A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 510ff.

<sup>40</sup> On this town see Ruge in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*, XIX (1938), p. 1127f.

<sup>41</sup> Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>42</sup> Ramsay, *op. cit.*, table facing p. 197.

<sup>43</sup> Of these only Nova Justiniana—Nova Justinianopolis, Justinianopolis Mela, Nova Justinianopolis Gordi—appears in 553. Three others—Cadosia, Linoe, Gordoserbon—are unheard of before 680.

<sup>44</sup> Ramsay, *op. cit.*, ad p. 197. In some of his tables Ramsay does not provide data from the lists of 680 and 692, but conflates the lists of earlier councils with the lists of the Council of Nicaea in 787. This in no way diminishes the evidential value of his data for our purposes here. The strong resemblances between the lists of the fifth and eighth centuries for the provinces of Asia and Hellespontus are particularly notable: Cf. Ramsay, *op. cit.*, ad p. 104, and p. 152.

rics of Asia Minor continue for the most part to be represented. This fact is particularly interesting, since even in early Byzantine times the towns of Asia Minor were much more numerous than those of the Balkans and were always represented in much greater numbers than the latter at the early Councils. In the seventh century, after the collapse of Byzantine power in the Balkans, this long-established distinction became particularly marked. Our investigation into the fate of Byzantine cities in the early Middle Ages has thus completely confirmed our general view of the Byzantine Empire in the seventh century, as regards both Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula.<sup>45</sup> Asia Minor continued to be covered with a network of cities, as in earlier times.

It might, of course, be asked whether some of the bishops who attended Councils were not titular dignitaries, whose sees had in fact ceased to exist, and who lived on a pension either in the capital or in other dioceses. This question has already been raised—very justifiably—about the bishoprics of the Balkan peninsula.<sup>46</sup> We may suspect, for example, that Bishop Andrew of Amphipolis, who was present at the Council of 692,<sup>47</sup> and perhaps the Metropolitans John and Margarites of Stobi, present at the Councils of 680 and 692,<sup>48</sup> were such titular bishops, since neither for that time nor for later periods do we have any positive evidence about the existence of their sees.<sup>49</sup> There can be no possible doubt, however, in connection with the cities of Asia Minor which, for the most part, are otherwise attested, and the representatives of which reappear at the Councils of the eighth and ninth century.

If we go further, and compare the episcopal lists of the Councils of 680 and 692 with those of later councils, we shall see that by the time of the Seventh Oecumenical Council held in Nicaea in 787, the number of episcopal cities in the Byzantine Empire had increased considerably. 319 bishops are recorded as having been present at this assembly.<sup>50</sup> This imposing number not only emphasizes the fact that the attendance of bishops at the Councils of 680 and 692 was by no means complete, but also bears witness to the foundation of new sees. According to Theophanes 338 bishops attended the iconoclast council of 754.<sup>51</sup> We do not, of course, possess any lists of those who participated in this council, but taking into account the similar number of bishops at Nicaea in 787, the figure given by Theophanes does not seem unrealistic and he certainly had no reason to exagger-

<sup>45</sup> Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Empire in the World of the Seventh Century," *supra*, pp. 3 ff.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Fanula Papazoglu, "Eion-Amfipolj-Hrisopolj," *Zbornik radova Viz. inst. Srpske akademije nauka*, 2 (1953), p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Mansi, XI, 993B.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 645A and 993B.

<sup>49</sup> Such suspicions are particularly well grounded with regard to Amphipolis, in place of which the town of Chrysopolis is later found. Cf. F. Papazoglu, *loc. cit.* In the case of Stobi, which was represented at the councils of 680 and 692 by two different persons (from which it follows that the second of them, Margarites, was appointed after the earlier council), it is not possible to be so categorical. Archaeological investigation has shown that the town's most flourishing period was from the fourth to the sixth century; there are no signs of building activity after this, but certain monuments of painting and sculpture are referred to a later date, though only tentatively, by the investigators of the site. Cf. E. Kitzinger, "A Survey of the Early Christian Town of Stobi," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 3 (1946), pp. 81-161.

<sup>50</sup> See their signatures in Mansi XIII, pp. 380-97.

<sup>51</sup> Theoph. 427, 30.

ate the numerical strength of this iconoclast gathering. In iconodule circles it was maintained that the Emperor Constantine V had founded new bishoprics so that, by appointing his own partisans to them, he would be able to increase the strength of the iconoclasts at the council. There is probably some truth in this accusation, but this was certainly not the only motive for founding new sees. In any case, they were not all established in mere villages, and their foundation presupposes the existence of a corresponding number of towns, small though these may have been.

A study both of the acts of the Nicene Council of 787, and of those of the councils held in Constantinople during the ninth century—the anti-Photian assembly of 869 and more particularly the Photian Synod of 879<sup>52</sup>—shows that new sees had also been founded in considerable numbers in the Balkan peninsula. Gradually consolidating its very shaky position in this area, the Byzantine government built new towns or revived old ones, wherever it succeeded in strengthening its position and, in consequence, it founded new sees. As early as the Council of 680 the bishops of the towns of Panion,<sup>53</sup> Mesembria<sup>54</sup> and Sozopolis<sup>55</sup> had appeared, and present at the Council of 692 were those of Edessa,<sup>56</sup> Uzusa<sup>57</sup> and Ainos<sup>58</sup>—places where, as far as can be seen, no bishoprics had previously existed. A whole series of new Balkan sees appears in the acts of 787, mainly situated in Thrace and, to a considerably lesser extent, in Greece.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Mansi, XVI, 189–95, and XVII, 373–7.

<sup>53</sup> Mansi, XI, 643B. Hierocles (ed. Honigmann 632, 5) mentions Πάνιον among the towns of the province of Europe, but no bishops of such a see are to be found at the councils of the fifth or sixth centuries. Considering the proximity of this town to the capital, it would seem that its omission cannot have been fortuitous. The town, indeed, was not represented in 692; but at the council of 787 its bishop was once more in attendance. (Mansi, XIII, 388C).

<sup>54</sup> Mansi, XI, 653C. This town is not mentioned by either Hierocles or in the acts of the earlier councils. It figures, however, in the episcopal lists of not only 680, but 692, 787, and 879.

<sup>55</sup> Mansi, XI, 645C and 653C. Peter, Bishop of Sozopolis, signed the decisions of this council, and, for some reason, did so twice. Subsequently, the bishops of Sozopolis took part in the councils of 787 and 879. Sozopolis does not figure in Hierocles or in the episcopal lists of the Council of Chalcedon. But the acts of the Council of Ephesus in 431 were signed by Ἀθανάσιος ἐπίσκοπος τῆς κατὰ Δουῆλον καὶ Σωζόπολιν ἀγίας . . . ἐκκλησίας (E. Schwartz, *Acta conc. oecum.*, I, 1, 2, p. 62, n. 160) who was probably bishop of both Develtus and Sozopolis; it seems that at this time the rights of the bishop of Develtus, who is also found in the acts of 451 (and later in those 787 and 879) also extended over Sozopolis, which was not yet an independent see.

<sup>56</sup> Mansi, XI, 993B: Ἰσιδωρος ἐλάχιστος ἐπίσκοπος Ἐδεσσηνῶν πόλεως. It is obvious that the Macedonian Edessa (Voden) is referred to here, since the signature of its bishop is immediately preceded by those of the Bishops of Philippi, the Island of Lemnos and of Amphipolis, and is followed by that of the Bishop of Stobi. Edessa is listed by Hierocles (Honigmann, 638, 8), but does not appear in the episcopal lists of the councils of the early Byzantine period.

<sup>57</sup> Mansi, XI, 992B: Γεώργιος ἐλάχιστος ἐπίσκοπος Οὐλούσης τῆς Θρακῶν χώρας. The name of this town may not be given here correctly. Its identification presents a difficult problem, unless we assume that it was Ostudizus, which was the same as the Thracian Nicaea or Nice. (Cf. C. Jireček, *Die Heerstrasse von Belgrad nach Constantinopel und die Balkanpässe* [Prague, 1877], pp. 49 and 100). Nicaea-Nice is found in Hierocles and in the conciliar lists of the eighth and ninth centuries: see note 59 below.

<sup>58</sup> George, Bishop τῆς Αἰνιτῶν πόλεως Θρακῶν χώρας (Mansi, XI, 992E) is probably to be identified as a bishop of Ainos. The town was known to Hierocles (Honigmann, p. 634, 5), but does not appear in the ancient lists of sees. Its bishop took part in the council of 879.

<sup>59</sup> A list of these towns follows here, but we cannot vouch for its completeness, since any indication that might facilitate the work of identification is almost never found in the episcopal lists of this council. For convenience the towns are grouped under the metropolitan sees to which they are assigned in the *Notitia episcopatum* of the time of Leo VI. (H. Gelzer, *Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der Notitiae episcopatum*, p. 549ff). Directly subject to the Patriarchate of Constantinople:

Among them are towns which, apparently, are mentioned only in conciliar lists and *notitiae episcopatum*, but there are also others whose names are well known in Byzantine history, such as Rhaedestus, Tzurullon, Apros, Bulgarophygon, Kallipolis, Monemvasia.<sup>60</sup>

Besides these towns, some of which continue to feature in the acts of the councils of the ninth century while others do not, a very considerable number of new Balkan dioceses was represented at the Photian Synod of 879, and a number of these had earlier appeared in the acts of the anti-Photian Synod of 869. Once again these towns were situated mainly in the East of the peninsula. Some of them are scarcely known from other sources; other bore historic names.<sup>61</sup>

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Neapolis (Christopolis, Kavalla), Derkos (Delkos, cf. Oberhummer, Pauly-Wissowa, IV, 2447), Nicaea; under the Metropolis of Heraclea in the province of Europe: Theodoropolis, Rhaedestus, Chersonesus, Chariopolis, Chalcis, Pamphylos, Lizica, Metrae, Tzurullon, Kallipolis, Apros, Koila (these last two are not in Leo's *Notitia*); under the Metropolis of Corinth: Monemvasia, Troezen, the Island of Aegina; under the Metropolis of Athens: Oreos (Histiaia, in Euboea), Porthmos (also in Euboea); under the Metropolis of Trajanopolis in the province of Rhodope: Anastasiopolis; under the Metropolis of Adrianople in the province of Haemimontus: Skopelos, Bulgarophygon. Not one of these towns is to be found in the episcopal lists of the preceding centuries (the same is true of the islands of Kephallenia, Zakynthos, and Kerkyra). Hierocles mentions Kallipolis, Apros, Koila, Nicaea, Porthmos, and Troezen (Honigmann, 633, 2; 634, 2, 3; 639, 3; 645, 7; 647, 1). The reading Νικάα is queried by Honigmann, while earlier editors gave it as Νικέδης, which version of the name is given by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, copying Hierocles (*De Thematibus*, 2, 35 ed. Pertusi). The acts of 787 confirm Honigmann's reading and so further bear out the fact that a town called Nicaea existed in Thrace. To distinguish this from the better known city of that name, which was the seat of the Council then taking place, the signature reads: 'Ιωάννης ἀνάξιος ἐπίσκοπος Νικαίας τῆς Θράκης (Mansi, XIII, 388C). Cf. also Jireček, *Die Heerstrasse*, p. 100. It is evidently the same town which appears as ἡ Νίκη in the acts of the Council of 879 (Mansi, XVII, 373C), in the *Notitia episc.* cod. Paris. gr. 1555 A (ed. C. De Boor, *Zeitschr. für Kirchengeschichte*, 12 [1891], p. 525) and in the *Notitia episc. Leonis VI* (ed. Gelzer, p. 551, no. 71). Cf. Oberhummer, Pauly-Wissowa, XVII, 282 ff. s. v. Nike (Νίκη) and see above, note 57.

<sup>60</sup> Some very important bishoprics known to Hierocles and found in the conciliar acts of the fifth and sixth centuries, but not appearing in the acts of the seventh century, such as Adrianople and Arcadiopolis, or absent from the acts of both the sixth and seventh centuries, such as Develtus or Nicopolis in Epirus, also reappear at this time. Oberhummer, Pauly-Wissowa, X, 1659 s. v. Kallipolis, maintains that Kallipolis, though not represented at the First Oecumenical Council of 325, appears in all the subsequent councils. He does not refer to any conciliar acts in support of this statement, but only to various *Notitiae episcopatum* and—through a misunderstanding—to George of Cyprus. In fact Kallipolis, known to Hierocles (Honigmann, 633, 2) and heavily fortified by Justinian (Procop. *De aed.* ed. Haury, III, 2, p. 142, 22) does not figure in the acts of any council before 787, strange as this is. Nor does Theophanes mention it at all during the period with which this article is concerned. His only reference to it belongs to the year 450 (Theoph. 102, 26). Nicephorus does not refer to it either.

<sup>61</sup> About one hundred bishops in all took part in the Council of 869 (cf. Mansi, XVI, pp. 189–95), whereas in 879 no less than 380 were present (Mansi, XVIII, pp. 373–9). In view of this, the list of those present at the later Council is of far greater interest. We shall excerpt from it those towns in the Balkan peninsula which do not appear in the earlier conciliar lists, once again giving no guarantee that these are absolutely correct or complete. No list of signatures has survived in the acts of this Council, and there is only the list of those who were present at the beginning of the first session. This document is not easy to use, and does not provide any clues that might assist in identifying the names given, so that the correct localization of the various towns is sometimes rather difficult. Here again we shall follow the division of the towns under metropolitan sees, as done in the *Notitia episcopatum* of Leo VI (towns which were represented at the Council of 869 are italicized). Archiepiscopal sees subordinate to the Patriarchate of Constantinople: *Rousion*, *Kypsele*, Hydros, *Messena*, Ganella, Brysis, Leukas, Roion; episcopal sees subordinate to the Metropolis of Heraclea: Madytos, Medeia; to Salonica: Dragouvitia, Kassandreia; to Athens: Euripos (Chalcis, in Euboea), the Island of Andros; the Metropolis of Patras and, subject to it, Methone; to Larissa: Pharsalos, *Zetounion*, Ezeron; to Naupactus: Joannina; to Philippopolis: Leuke, Joannitza, *Bukuba*; to Trajanopolis (the Metropolis of the province of Rhodope): Didymoteichos, Makre, Mosynopolis, Pora, Xanthia, Peritheorion; to Philippi: Kaisaropolis; to Adrianople: Trapobitzye, Bukellas, Probaton; to Dyrrachium: Stephaniaka;



A number of other important towns which, having featured in the conciliar acts of the fifth and sixth centuries, do not appear in those of the seventh and eighth are once more in evidence, such as Larissa (represented in 869), Demetrias, Naupactus, Trajanopolis and Anchialus.<sup>62</sup>

It is impossible not to observe how close is the agreement between the lists of the Council of 879—and, to a lesser extent, those of 787—and the list of metropolitan sees, archbishoprics and bishoprics in the *Notitia* of Leo VI's reign. Naturally, only a part of the sees enumerated in the *notitia* was represented at the council. But the coincidences are none the less remarkable. The Balkan provinces most remote from Constantinople are sparsely represented in the acts as is to be expected. The provinces near the capital, such as Europe and Haemimontus were much more in evidence at the Councils of 787 and 879, and that of Rhodope was fully represented at the latter council, all eight bishops mentioned in the *notitia*, headed by their metropolitan, being present. This creates an impression that the lists in this *notitia* correspond fairly closely to the actual situation. This impression would be further strengthened if a similar comparison were to be made in the case of the provinces of Asia Minor. Thus—exercising all the caution required in dealing with this kind of document—it may be assumed that the lists of the *Notitia* of Leo VI reflect to a considerable degree the actual state of affairs. Therefore, it may be interesting to note that they enumerate no less than fifty-one metropolitan sees, forty-nine archbishoprics subject to Constantinople, 388 episcopal sees in Asia Minor and eighty-three in the Balkan peninsula, as well as twenty-nine in Calabria and Sicily, ten in Rhodes and five in Lesbos.<sup>63</sup>

The conclusions we have reached on the basis of conciliar acts are fully corroborated by our narrative sources, meagre though they are. Let us consider the principal one, which is the Chronicle of Theophanes. In describing the events of the seventh and eighth centuries, Theophanes mentions a considerable number of towns in Asia Minor, albeit they are only those that happen to concern his narrative.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, the number of Balkan towns mentioned by

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the Metropolis of Nea Patras and, finally, Ochrida (which lay outside the imperial boundaries and is not mentioned in the *Notitia episcopatum* of Leo VI). Not one of these sees is mentioned in the conciliar episcopal lists of the preceding centuries, including those of Nicaea, 787. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the bishops of Patras, Messene, and Chalcis (Euripos) had signed letters in reply to the encyclical of the Emperor Leo I in 485 (cf. Mansi, VII, 612BC). Of these towns only Pharsalos, Mothone (= Methone) and Patras were known to Hierocles (Honigmann, 642, 13; 647, 17; 648, 3).

<sup>62</sup> Of course, such absences could be entirely fortuitous. Thus, for instance, there is the striking fact that, after the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the representatives of Philippolis were not present at any council, including that of 879, when, as has been seen, three bishops subject to this metropolis attended.

<sup>63</sup> Gelzer, *Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der Notitiae episcopatum*, pp. 550–559.

<sup>64</sup> We subjoin a list of the more important towns of Asia Minor mentioned by Theophanes in his Chronicle after the beginning of the seventh century. Cf. De Boor's excellent index and also the very useful one to the German translation of a part of the Chronicle by L. Breyer, *Bilderstreit und Arabersturm in Byzanz. Das 8. Jahrhundert (717–813) aus der Weltchronik des Theophanes, Byz. Geschichtsschreiber*, hrsg. E von Ivánka, Bd. VI s.a. (1957). Abydos, Adramyttion, Akroinon, Amasia, Amastris, Amida, Amorion, Ankyra, Antiocheia (Pisidia), Ataleia, Caesarea, Chalcedon, Charsianon, Chrysopolis, Cyzicus, Dorylaion, Edessa, Ephesus, Germaniceia, Iconium, Martyropolis, Melitene, Mopsuestia, Myra, Nacoleia, Nicaea, Nicomedia, Pergamon, Perge, Prusa, Pylae, Samosata, Sardis,

him for this period is rather limited.<sup>65</sup> Many famous cities of the Balkan peninsula that figure in his narrative of the preceding period, such as Salona, Sirmium, Singidunum (Belgrade), Naissus (Niš), do not appear after the end of the sixth century. The towns of Asia Minor, on the other hand, cited by him for the early period continue, with a few fortuitous exceptions, to be mentioned later.

Každan tries to support his view of the complete decline of Byzantine cities in the early Middle Ages by a reference to Ibn-Khordādhbeh who, he claims, knows of only five cities in Asia Minor: Ephesus, Nicaea, Amorium, Ancyra and Samala (in addition to Nicomedia which lay in ruins).<sup>66</sup> In fact, Ibn Khordādhbeh refers to these cities by a word which his learned editor de Goeje translated as "ville," but he also gives for each theme he mentions the number of fortified places ("places fortifiées," "forteresses" according to de Goeje's translation), which in only a few rare cases he calls by name. According to his data, at the time of his visit to the Empire, i.e. in the forties of the ninth century, there were ten fortified towns in the theme of Thrace, as against three in the theme of Macedonia (the other themes of the Balkan peninsula are not described by Ibn-Khordādhbeh), which he does not name, while in the themes of Asia Minor there were all together 128 cities and fortified places.<sup>67</sup> Here again we see the same contrast between the number of Balkan and Anatolian towns. In the light of what has been said above, we must not only reject the notion that there were only five cities in Asia Minor at the time of Ibn-Khordādhbeh, but we must also suppose that their number was in fact greater than the sum total of fortified places mentioned by the Arab geographer.

It should be noted, too, that the old towns not only continued to exist, but were subsequently fortified and rebuilt, and, what is more important, that new towns were being founded. In the Chronicle of the Patriarch Nicephorus there is a statement that the Emperor Constantine V, around the year 755, "began to build towns (πολίμματα) in Thrace" for the Syrians and Armenians whom he had brought over from Melitene and Theodosiopolis, and whom he had "provided with every necessity and generously endowed."<sup>68</sup> We may assume that such migrations, frequent in Byzantium between the seventh and ninth centuries, were in other cases, too, accompanied by the building of cities and forts. Such was the migration of Slav population to Asia Minor as well as that of people from Asia Minor to the deserted and ravaged regions of the Balkans. It is tempt-

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Sebasteia, Sebastopolis, Sinope, Smyrna, Syllaion, Synada, Tarsus, Theodosiana, Theodosiopolis, Trapezus, Tyana. To these might be added a list of smaller localities and fortresses: Amnia, Andrasos, Apollonias, Artake, Atroa, Bryas, Darenon, Herakleokastron, Kamachon, Kelbianon, Kopidnadon, Krasos, Libos, Malagina, Malakopea, Masalaion, Melon, Modrina, Phoenix, Siderokastron, Sision, Sophon, Sykekastron, Taranton.

<sup>65</sup> Apart from Constantinople itself, the following are the more important Balkan towns referred to by Theophanes after the beginning of the seventh century: Adrianople, Anchialus, Arcadiopolis, Athens, Barna, Beroea (Thrace), Develtus, Heraclea (Thrace), Marcianopolis, Mesembria, Monobasia (= Monemvasia), Odyssus, Philippi, Philippopolis, Selymbria, Serdica, Thessalonica, Tomis, Tzurullon, and the following lesser settlements and fortresses: Abrolebas, Lithosoria, Marcellae, Medeia, Meleona, Probaton, Versinicia.

<sup>66</sup> Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>67</sup> Ibn-Khordādhbeh, *Bibl. geographorum arabicorum*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, VI, pp. 77-80.

<sup>68</sup> Niceph. 66, 11. Cf. Theoph. 429, 26.

ing to suppose that it was emigrants from the Anatolian Chrysopolis who built the town of Chrysopolis at the mouth of the Strymon that replaced destroyed Amphipolis.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, the migration of a Serbian group to Asia Minor probably caused the foundation of the town Gordoserbon in Bithynia, which, as we have already noticed, is first mentioned in synodal acts of the end of the seventh century.<sup>70</sup> The renovation of old Thracian towns by the Empress Irene is directly mentioned in the Chronicle of Theophanes, which says that Irene, after visiting Thrace in 784, ordered the rebuilding (οἰκοδομηθῆναι κελεύσασα) of Beroea and later that of Anchialus.<sup>71</sup> The same chronicler reports that the Emperor Nicephorus I rebuilt (ἔκτισε) Ancyra, Thebasa, and Andrasos.<sup>72</sup> Well-known inscriptions, re-edited and studied by Grégoire, speak of the fortification of Ancyra and Nicaea by Michael III.<sup>73</sup> Even if the building activity known from such occasional and incomplete data was primarily determined by military considerations, it attests not to the decline but to the growth of towns. In particular, as far as the Balkan peninsula is concerned, it reflects the process of the gradual re-establishment of Byzantine authority in certain regions, and this is confirmed, as we have seen, by the appearance of new bishoprics in conciliar acts.

We have, unfortunately, almost no information about the character and life of Byzantine cities in our period. The little that we do have concerns only cities like Constantinople, Thessalonica, and the most prominent centres of Asia Minor, about whose importance there is absolutely no question. Thus, for example, a stray remark in the Chronicle of Theophanes tells us that at the end of the eighth century the fair of Ephesus yielded 100 lbs. of gold in commercial taxes.<sup>74</sup> The sum is enormous, and possibly exaggerated. Or again, in the beginning of the ninth century Gregory the Decapolite saw in the harbor of Ephesus a multitude of ships (πλήθος πλοίων) engaged in commerce.<sup>75</sup> Nicaea, according to the Continuator of Theophanes, was a city of ancient wealth and large population (πόλις ἀρχαίόπλουτος καὶ πολύανδρος).<sup>76</sup> There is no reason to doubt that many other cities, both the coastal ones and the more important centers of the hinterland, retained their importance, not only as military and administrative posts, but also as centers of trade and the crafts. Otherwise the continuance of a developed monetary economy in Byzantium would have been inconceivable.

That the economy was a monetary one is confirmed, as we have seen, both by

<sup>69</sup> Cf. F. Papazoglu, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. St. Stanojević, *Vizantijska i Srbi* (1906), p. 41; *Istorija naroda Jugoslavije*, I (1953), p. 229.

<sup>71</sup> Theoph. 417, 6–11. The Thracian Beroea (Stara Zagora) which is mentioned by Hierocles and the bishop of which was present at Chalcedon in 451, does not feature in later conciliar acts and reappears only at the anti-Photian Council of 869 (Mansi, XVII, 1948). It is certainly the Thracian town which is here referred to, for the signature of its Bishop is followed by those of the Bishops of Tzurullon and Heraclea. Anchialus, known to Hierocles and appearing in the Acts of the Fifth Oecumenical Council of 553, is found again only in the Acts of the Photian Council of 879 (Mansi, XVI, 376–77). We do not find the bishops of either of these towns at the Council of 787.

<sup>72</sup> Theoph. 481, 9.

<sup>73</sup> H. Grégoire, "Inscriptions historiques byzantines," *Byzantion*, 4 (1927/8), p. 437f.

<sup>74</sup> Theoph. 469, 31: τὸ κομμέριον τοῦ πανηγυρίου ἐ λίτρων χρυσοῦ ὄν.

<sup>75</sup> *Vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite*, ed. Dvornik, p. 53, 19.

<sup>76</sup> Theoph. Cont. 464, 8. Cf. Každan, *op. cit.*, p. 184ff., where he has assembled other evidence from narrative sources.

numismatic evidence, and by a multitude of data in Byzantine and non-Byzantine sources, of narrative as well as of juridical character. We learn from them that taxes, the salaries of officials, and even the wages of both city and village labourers were paid in money. The Farmer's Law often speaks of the daily wage of village laborers, communal herdsman, and guards,<sup>77</sup> and in one passage explicitly states that this daily wage consisted of 12 *folles*.<sup>78</sup> The same wage is mentioned in papyri and in hagiographic documents.<sup>79</sup> Monetary fines appear both in the Farmer's Law and in the *Ecloga*.<sup>80</sup> The ninth-century Arab geographer Ibn Khordâdbeh indicates the cash pay of Byzantine soldiers and officers of different ranks.<sup>81</sup> The highest received the enormous sum of 40 lbs. a year, a figure that appears likewise in a somewhat later official pay list of the *strategi* of the themes dating from the reign of Leo VI.<sup>82</sup> The same Arab writer reports that a hearth-tax of 6 *dirchem* was levied in Byzantium on each household.<sup>83</sup> This again is confirmed by the statement of a Byzantine chronicler that in the twenties of the ninth century each provincial taxpayer contributed 2 *miliaresia* by way of *kapnikon*.<sup>84</sup>

The developed state of the Byzantine monetary economy in the early Middle Ages appears most clearly in the well-known account by Theophanes of the financial measures of Nicephorus I (802-811).<sup>85</sup> Here we are told of various taxes and duties, among them a fee of 2 *keratia* that was charged for the issue of official acquittances; of a duty of 2 *nomismata* on each imported slave; of the obligation of village communities to contribute a given sum (18 1/2 *nomismata*) for the upkeep and equipment of indigent soldiers; of the considerable loans (12 lbs. of gold) which the Treasury granted at heavy interest to merchants and ship-owners. Although these data refer to the early years of the ninth century, we may apply them without reservation to the preceding period as well, since they express nothing new, but merely mark the introduction of a stricter financial control and a more stringent exaction of government revenues within an existing framework.

Theophanes' account of the loans that the Emperor Nicephorus gave to traders beyond the sea should be compared with the so-called Rhodian Sea Law (νόμος ρωδικός), presumably composed in the seventh or eighth century.<sup>86</sup> This juridical compilation of the early Middle Ages reflects a fairly intensive maritime trade. It enumerates different types of merchandise, among them gold and silver. The value of merchandise as also the income of the captain shipowner (ναύκληρος), his assistants, and sailors are all expressed in monetary units.

<sup>77</sup> Ed. W. Ashburner, "The Farmer's Law," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 30 (1910), para. 22, 25, 33, 34.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 22.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, "Löhne und Preise in Byzanz," *BZ*, 32 (1932), p. 295ff.

<sup>80</sup> *Farmer's Law*, para. 22, 62. *Ecloga*, XVII 29. Cf. Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, 305 for monetary fines in the legal documents of the preceding and following periods.

<sup>81</sup> Ibn Khordâdbeh, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup> *De Caerim.*, 696, 13-14.

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Khordâdbeh, *loc. cit.*

<sup>84</sup> Theoph. Cont. 54, 4-7.

<sup>85</sup> Theoph. 486-7.

<sup>86</sup> W. Ashburner, *The Rhodian Sea Law* (Oxford, 1909).

Trading operations are often said to be conducted on credit, and we are told about loans and interest. Here, too, cash fines are appointed for certain offenses.<sup>87</sup>

All these data, which it would be easy to multiply, attest to the preponderant role of a monetary economy in early medieval Byzantium. A developed monetary economy implies in turn a developed urban life and a considerable number of towns.

Granted, however, that the continuous existence of a great many cities is proven, it does not follow that the Byzantine town did not differ in many ways from the ancient *polis*. The ruralization of towns was a common phenomenon in the Middle Ages, and it also affected Byzantium. Even in the largest cities a part of the population was engaged in cultivation and viniculture. The *Miracula S. Demetrii* tell us that during one of the Avaro-Slavic attacks on Thessalonica many of the inhabitants were outside the city walls, having gone out to work in their fields.<sup>88</sup>

It is not true that in the early Middle Ages Byzantine towns were in complete decay and had nearly ceased to exist. No more is it true that they preserved intact the organization of the ancient *polis*, since a certain decline of city life had already started in late Roman times. The greatest authorities on ancient history see in this decline one of the most important aspects of the general decay of the Empire.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps in this, too, there is a certain degree of exaggeration, since the cities as such did not cease to exist; yet there is no doubt that even in the late-Roman period the old municipal organization began to decay. This process was not only continued, but intensified in early Byzantine times, until, with the introduction of the theme system, municipal government was altogether destroyed.<sup>90</sup> The most important towns of the Byzantine provinces became the seats of the *strategi*, and centers of their military and civil organization. In becoming the nerve center of the Empire, the new military and bureaucratic machinery stifled the last remains of city autonomy.

The results of this process may be observed in the peripheral regions of the Empire; at Cherson on the one side, in Dalmatia on the other, where we see how, with the introduction of the theme system, imperial power replaced local city rule.<sup>90a</sup> In the central regions of the Empire this change must have occurred even more rapidly and radically. Municipal organization had long been dead when its final abolition was formally decreed by Leo VI, whose well-known *novella* pro-

<sup>87</sup> For a fuller treatment of this point see E. E. Lipšic, "K voprosu o gorode v Vizantii VIII-IX vv.," *Viz. Vrem.*, 6 (1953), p. 117 ff., where the importance of the Sea Law in connection with this problem is rightly emphasized.

<sup>88</sup> *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, II, 2. no. 170.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. M. Rostovtseff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1926), p. 478 ff. W. M. Ramsay (*The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1895-1897]) has very clearly shown how certain ancient cities declined as the old Roman routes lost their predominant position: the case of Apamea is especially instructive in this connection. But even this phenomenon, brought about by the transfer of the center of communications to Constantinople, goes back to the early Byzantine period. Furthermore, just as the older focal points declined in importance at this time, so, on the other hand, did the towns situated on the routes connected with the new capital become more prominent.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Bratianu, *op. cit.*, p. 83 ff.

<sup>90a</sup> Cf. J. Ferluga, *Vizantiska uprava u Dalmaciji* (Belgrade, 1957) (with a French summary: *L'administration byzantine en Dalmatie*, p. 154-62).

claims that henceforward all authority is vested in the emperor and his administration.<sup>91</sup> The triumph of all-embracing centralism more than anything else explains why the subsequent development of Byzantine urban life was marked by a certain impotence, why it did not produce that class of traders and craftsmen who in the West were the forerunners of new times, and why, finally, Byzantine towns were left so far behind the rising power of the Italian cities. But that is another subject, and a very large one too.

To come back to the early Middle Ages: by surviving the crisis that assailed the imperial domains as the ancient world gave place to the medieval, the Byzantine cities, and especially those of Asia Minor, assured the continued existence of a monetary economy and, in this way, safeguarded the proverbial wealth of the Empire. This, it would seem, was the chief element of stability that preserved the traditional framework of the state. At the same time, however, the provinces underwent a violent upheaval and agrarian relations were completely changed, thereby altering and renovating the whole social structure of Byzantium; and in this renovation was the source of new strength which determined the subsequent evolution of the Empire.

<sup>91</sup> Nov. Leonis XLVI, ed. Noailles-Dain (Paris, 1944), pp. 183-5.